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BRACING FOR JAWAD

With the deep depression in the Bay of Bengal intensifying into Cyclone Jawad on Friday afternoon, it is expected to reach the west-central Bay of Bengal off North Andhra Pradesh and Odisha coast by Saturday morning. In the picture, fishermen are seen shifting their boats from the seashore to safer places in Visakhapatnam on Friday | G SATYANARAYANA | P7

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With Omicron, strict Covid norms back

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

WITH two cases of Omicron variant of Covid19 detected in Bengaluru and clusters forming in educational institutions, the Karnataka government on Friday issued fresh guidelines, making it mandatory for parents, who are sending their children to schools and colleges, to be fully vaccinated. Also, double-dose vaccination is a must for entering malls and cinema halls.

The guidelines, issued after Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai's meeting with experts to discuss the state's strategy to contain the Covid spread, stated that educational institutions should postpone all cultural events till January 15.

After the meeting, Revenue Minister R Ashoka said the government is taking measures for proactive monitoring, surveillance and focused implementation of five-fold strategy of test, track, treat, vaccination and adherence to Covid-appropriate behaviour to prevent the spread of the new variant in the state.

Acknowledging that the situation is grave, the government is bringing back the system that was in place during the second wave of the pandemic. It includes increasing the number of tests to one lakh a day, oxygenated beds, oxygen plants, reactivating oxygen transportation system, ensuring the availability of medicines, restarting state control room, appointing nodal officers and giving emphasis on contact tracing.

Ashoka said the double-dose vaccination for parents of students below 18 years old has been made mandatory as the number of cases in educational institutions is rising. CONTINUED ON: P4

SA TRAVELLER TESTS COVID+VE

A traveller from South Africa tested positive for Covid-19 after landing in Bengaluru on Wednesday. His swab samples have been sent for genome sequencing to determine whether he is infected with Omicron. P3

A health worker at Kempegowda bus station adjusts the mask of an elderly woman in Bengaluru on Friday | SUBRAMANI

TAKING ON THE VARIANT

Parents of children below 18 years, going to school/college, to be compulsorily vaccinated with two doses

Two doses of vaccine must to enter malls, cinema halls, theatres

All govt employees to be fully vaccinated

Maximum 500 people allowed at gatherings, meetings, conferences; organisers responsible for enforcing Covid-appropriate behaviour

₹250 fine for not wearing masks in municipal corporation areas, ₹100 in other areas

Cultural activities, functions in educational institutions to be postponed till Jan 15, 2022

Compulsory testing of health workers, senior citizens, people with comorbidities to be taken up by health dept

Random Covid tests on college students and school children once in 15 days

Hotel and restaurant staff, shopkeepers of malls, markets, cooks, door delivery staff, industrial workers, office workers, pub and bar staff members, attendants in malls, cinema halls, those in crowds and workers of Anganawadi centers shall also under go random tests once in 15 days

FOUR SOUTH AFRICANS NOT TRACEABLE

BENGALURU: BBMP and health department officials are trying to trace four South Africans who flew into Bengaluru two weeks ago, but are not traceable now. Officials say that many travellers from high-risk countries had arrived in Bengaluru much before the state government issued norms making negative RT-PCR test report mandatory, besides a test on arrival. BBMP has sought police help to find them. P3

EXPRESS READ

5 MLAs in Bihar refuse to recite nat'l song

Patna: Five MLAs of Asasuddin Owaisi-led AIMIM on Friday refused to recite the national song on concluding day of the winter session of the state legislature on Friday, triggering sharp reaction from the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party | P10

TAKE YOUR SHOT
Dec 02 66,21,382 doses
Dec 03 60,58,055 doses

NATION WIDE	DEC 02	DEC 03
Fresh cases	9,765	9,216
Recoveries	8,548	8,612
Deaths	477	391

KARNATAKA	DEC 02	DEC 03
Fresh cases	363	413
Recoveries	191	256
Deaths	3	4

As fuel sales go up after tax cut, revenue loss to state minimised

BANSY KALAPPA @ Bengaluru

IT has been a month since the state government cut taxes on fuels, which Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai had said would lead to a revenue loss of Rs 2,000 crore to the state exchequer. However, the cut in fuel prices has led to nearly a 10-fold increase in the sales of petrol and diesel, minimising losses to the state.

In November, revenues from fuel sales were up by approximately Rs 200 crore. "The consumption and sales tax collection of oil companies is also more as compared to last year," Commercial Taxes Commissioner C Shikha told *TNIE*.

On November 4, soon after the government announced the cuts, she had said that the revenue loss would be made up with the increase in consumption which has come true.

Karnataka had reduced the taxes and levies by about Rs 7 per litre of petrol and diesel, while the Centre had effected a cut of around Rs 5.

BT Manohar, Chairman, state GST committee, said, "With the fuel rate cut, the consumption has increased. This has resulted in an increase in revenues from fuel sales."

Despite heavy rain and inclement weather, the fuel sales were up in November. The consumption will only go up over the next few months with the weather expected to ease up, sources said. CONTINUED ON: P7

NAVY DAY

Trident's killer blow on Pakistan navy

PRIYANKA CHANDANI

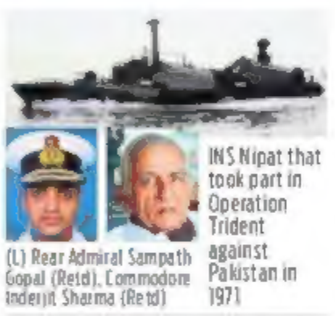
ON December 2, 1971, when Rear Admiral S R Sampath Gopal (Retd) and Commodore Inderjit Sharma (Retd) along with other crew members were ordered to sail out of Mumbai harbour to the south of Saurashtra port in Diu and then to Okha, little did they know their mission would be commemorated as Navy Day each year.

For, a day after the war with Pakistan began, their audacious attack, code named Operation Trident, dealt a huge blow on the enemy's navy. It has been 50 years since the 14-day war, which shaped the course of not just India's history but altered the geography of the subcontinent, forming a new nation — Bangladesh.

"It was perhaps the only action we saw, that too immediately after getting commissioned in Indian Navy. It made a lot of impact on our outlook and attitude to service," recalls Rear Admiral Gopal.

Undertaken as a moral war to liberate people from the East Pakistan, the naval operation took place under the cover of darkness after Pakistan launched a pre-emptive attack on seven Indian airfields on December 3. Indian Navy's Osa class boats of the 25th missile vessel squadron that comprised Nipat, Nirghat, Kachall, Kiltan and Veer were chosen for the operation due to their lethality, high speed and small radar cross-section. Two of the boats were towed to Okha from Mumbai because they could not sail beyond 250 knots.

"We were asked to sail on December 2 and anchored in Diu. We were waiting for orders till December 3. In the evening, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi declared war, and then we were asked to execute Operation Trident. On the afternoon of December 4, five of us (boats and crew), assembled in Dwarka and the operation was to be executed the same night. The combined briefing was done and we were not to break any radio signals so we kept all the briefing close to each other," recalls the Rear Admiral. P9



(L) Rear Admiral Sampath Gopal (Retd), Commodore Inderjit Sharma (Retd)

INS Nipat that took part in Operation Trident against Pakistan in 1971

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